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ABSTRACT

This document was developed by the Kansas State Board of Education to help local school districts establish school-site councils and assist in their operation. The Kansas legislature requires all school districts to participate in the Quality Performance Accreditation System (QPA). As part of that legislative requirement, each school in every public school district that operates more than one school must establish a school-site council. Each council advises and counsels its local school in evaluating state, district, and school-site performance goals and objectives. Each council also provides input on the methodology used to achieve those goals and objectives. Part 1 of this document reviews council roles and responsibilities. Part 2 offers information on the skills needed to build effective council teams and process strategies to aid the councils' work, such as decision making, communicating with the school community, gathering and analyzing information, and developing a planning cycle. Appendices contain the Kansas statute that mandates school-site councils, a school-site survey, and samples of local school-site council guidelines, correspondence, and a press release. (LMI)

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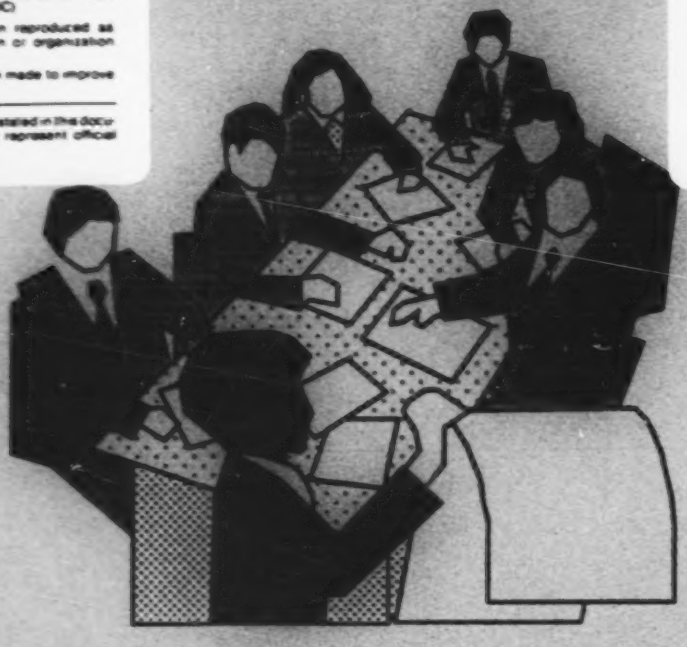

FOR KANSAS SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS

EA 025 400

Adapted from School Improvement Council Guide to Effectiveness, published by the School Improvement Council Assistance (formerly School Council Assistance Project), College of Education, University of South Carolina, Columbia, South Carolina.

Kansas State Board of Education

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PREFACE

School Site Councils For Kansas Schools and Districts has been developed by the Kansas State Board of Education to assist local districts establish school site councils and assist in their operation. The material presented in this publication is drawn extensively from the School Improvement Council Guide to Effectiveness published by the School Improvement Council Assistance, College of Education, University of South Carolina, Columbia, S. C. In addition, this publication is provided to assist school districts in complying with K.S.A. 72-6439(c)(1), which provides as follows:

> (c) (1) On or before January 1, 1993, each school in every district which operates more than one school shall establish a school site council. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: Teachers and other school personnel, parents of pupils attending the school, the business community, and other community groups. A school site council may be established in school districts which operate only one school or, in lieu thereof, the board of education of the school district shall serve as the council. School site councils shall be responsible for providing advice and counsel in evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives and in determining the methods that should be employed at the school site to meet these goals and objectives. (2) The state board of education will evaluate the work of the school site councils and the effectiveness thereof in facilitating educational improvement and restructuring. The results of the state board's evaluation will be contained in a report that will be published on July 1, 1995. (3) The provisions of this subsection shall expire on June 30,1996, unless extended by the legislature during the 1996 regular session.

Other information contained in this guide is only intended to be available as a resource and is not mandated through this legislation. Councils should use it to whatever level and extent is appropriate to meet their needs and assist in their work. It is important for our schools and school communities to continue to work together for Kansas students.

Lee Droegemueller
Commissioner of Education

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School Site Councils

Introduction

The Kansas State Board of Education adopted on March 12, 1991, the Quality Performance Accreditation System (QPA), an effort to address school improvement, accountability, and individual student performance at the building level. The 1992 Kansas legislature required all districts to participate in Quality Performance Accreditation. As a part of that legislative requirement, each school in every public school district which operates more than one school must establish a school site council. Under this legislation, each council will advise and counsel their local school in evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives. Each council will also provide input into determining the methods that should be employed at the school site to meet those goals and objectives. Non-public schools and those schools accredited as special purpose schools are not required to have school site councils. School site councils must be established by January 1, 1993.

The State Board of Education has been charged with evaluating the work of the school site councils and their effectiveness in facilitating educational improvement and restructuring. The results of the state board's evaluation will be contained in a report that is to be published by July 1, 1995.

The statute mandating school site councils, Appendix A, contains the requirements which councils must meets. Other information in this guide has been developed to assist districts and schools in implementing their school site councils and is not required. Part I reviews council roles and responsibilities. The information in Part II offers skills to help build effective council teams and process strategies to aid the work of the councils.

The Importance of Parent/Citizen Involvement

The evidence is clear. When parents are involved in their children's education, children do better in school. Parents and the school community can bring great wisdom to the work of the school site councils if they are truly a part of the decision making process. They know intimately about their own children and their community and they have access to the community. School site councils can begin a collaborative dialogue on the learning needs of the community and how both parties (schools and communities) share the obligation, resources, and responsibility for the development of the learning community.

Part I

What is a School Site Council?

School Site Council: The mission of the school site council (SSC) is to provide advice and counsel regarding specified areas of their school's programs and operation. The responsibilities of each council can be determined by the group membership, with the continuing focus, as provided in state law, on:

- providing advice and counsel in evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives; and,
- in determining the methods that should be employed at the school site to meet those goals and objectives.

Council member responsibilities: In carrying out these responsibilities, council members might be involved in:

- collecting information about conditions of the school which relate to the following four areas identified in QPA—
  1. School improvement through effective school principles.
  2. High standard of academic performance through an integrated curricular approach.
  3. Human resource development/staff training and retraining.
  4. Community-based programs/the learning community concept.
- reviewing, discussing, and analyzing this information;
- providing input to building/district four-year strategic plan;
- making program and/or policy recommendations to the principal, district office and board of education;
- monitoring implementation of planned activities;
- making reports to staff, district office, school board, parents and community;
- evaluating achievements; and,
- evaluating their role in the restructuring process.

Council members should be expected to:

- attend all council meetings;
- act as a communication link between the council and staff, students, parents and community;
- contribute to the group and help members function as a team; and
- accept responsibilities for council work to assure that proposed objectives are achieved.

Who May Serve on a School Site Council?

Composition of the Council: The membership of each council is determined at the school site level. The number of members that comprise the council is not indicated in the legislation, however, it establishes that the following are required to be represented on each council:

- teachers;
- other school personnel;
- the principal;
- parents of pupils attending the school;
- the business community, and;
- other community groups.

Membership: It is clear from the legislation cited above that school site councils are to be oriented more toward community and parent membership than toward school staff. It is recommended that special attention be directed toward ensuring that groups traditionally underrepresented and/or under-involved have representation on and/or access to providing input into the council. Whenever possible, appointments should be made to balance the group in terms of race, sex, geography and other variables, to allow the council membership to mirror the school and the community acting as partners in meeting the needs of the learning community.

Each board of education will determine how the selection and appointment of site council members will be made throughout the district.

Creating task forces or ad hoc committees as part of the council structure may increase involvement of more people in the work of the council and ensure greater representation. Often people are willing to volunteer their time to work on a specific issue if there is a definite timetable that includes a target date for concluding the committee's business.

A district may wish to examine existing parent/community based councils and determine how existing groups can support common purpose and goals. Information is provided in Appendix B about which councils might be adapted to serve as a school site council.

District Organization: Every public school building accredited by the Kansas State Board of Education must have an individual site-based council. The Kansas State Board of Education does not have the authority to grant a variance from this statutory requirement. Non-public schools and those schools accredited as special purpose schools are not required to have school site councils.

Open Meetings Law: Each school site council will operate within the Kansas Open Meetings Law. An orientation and briefing should be provided for council members, reviewing the open meetings law and the Kansas Open Records Act.

Council Community Membership: Effective Councils will consist of local residents who have accurate knowledge of families in the community and who are willing to make a commitment to the school community. Each member should have specific contributions to make in terms of information, contacts, and resources that will support the school in meeting its goals and objectives. Self-motivation, enthusiasm, and reliability are important characteristics for council members.

Members from business and other community groups can come from a wide variety of backgrounds. Community members who have been valuable on other advisory groups such as the Parents As Teachers Community Advisory Groups have included:

- local newspaper editor;
- the mayor, city commissioner, local/state legislators;
- medical personnel;
- clergy;
- retired members of the community;
- bankers;
- representatives of higher education;
- members of the Chamber of Commerce;
- representatives of local retail stores;
- city employees;
- attorneys;
- employees of agencies such as SRS, mental health, or drug treatment and prevention units;
- farmers;
- law enforcement officials; and,
- students.

Characteristics of Effective School Site Councils

The following areas include recommendations which might be addressed to help councils work as effectively as possible.

Clear Sense of Purpose: Effective councils set short and long term goals and objectives. Council members need to share a common vision of the ideal future school and community. This vision must change and evolve over time. Clearly stated benchmarks and task-oriented strategies give the council a sense of purpose and direction, which provide a barometer of the council's impact on the school and the community.

Each council member must be aware of his/her responsibilities. Orientation of new members is vital. Awareness of effective schools research, the change process, and the Quality Performance Accreditation System (to be in place in all schools by 1996) is important to the successful work of the council.

Action-Oriented Meetings: Council meetings need to be guided by well-planned agendas. Decisions must be made and plans of action developed and implemented. These actions will provide evidence to members and constituents that council meetings are worth their personal time and effort.

Size of the Council: Ideally, a council will have 7 to 16 members. Research has found that this size group provides enough people to perform the council's duties and functions without causing collaborative decision-making to become unwieldy.

Council Leadership: Experience has shown that effective councils have chairpersons elected by council members rather than appointed by principals. It is also recommended that the group select a secretary or recorder.

Scheduled Meetings: It is recommended that councils meet at regularly scheduled times, at least once per month, since the complex process of assessing, planning, and monitoring cannot be accomplished without sufficient time devoted to it.

Consideration will need to be given to scheduling meetings at times and in places comfortable and convenient to large numbers of people to obtain the greatest amount of participation of persons representing a cross-section of interests.

Service on Council: The length and schedule for serving on a council will be determined at the district/school level. To involve more participants over a period of time, it is suggested that some mechanism to ensure rotation of council membership be outlined initially.

Recognition of Council Members: Each council member should have a personal sense of accomplishment and receive public recognition for his/her services. People need to know they are appreciated; by being appreciated they are more willing to give of their time.

Decision Making: The councils have no legal powers of decision-making designated by law to the board of education. It seems advisable, however, to provide training in group process skills in order for the council to function effectively and make appropriate recommendations. Within the council operations, a statement of operational procedures could address the methods to be used to reach decisions or recommendations.

Evaluation and Monitoring: The major purpose for each council, as stated in law, is to provide advice and counsel in evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives. As the building council representatives become involved in the QPA process, the council may participate in the evaluation of the building progress toward achieving the identified improvement plan outcomes.

Annual Report: An annual report of the work of the council will be required of each school site council. The information to be addressed in the council report will be provided to each council early enough to allow time for completion. Each report is to be sent to the local board of education and submitted to the state board.

The Role of the Principal

The principal is a key member of the school site council and should seek its help in improving student achievement and community participation in the school. Principals can help their councils be more effective by:

- Helping to build a **shared vision** for school improvement regularly and clearly with the entire school community;
- Attending council meetings as an **active** participant;
- Providing the council with full **information** about the school (including curriculum, test scores, budget, etc.) as well as information about district and state policies;
- Securing **support services**, such as secretarial assistance, transportation and funding for council projects;
- Affording council members with **training opportunities** in such areas as council roles and responsibilities, team building, and effective decision making;
- Being aware that council members may be uncomfortable disagreeing with a principal during council meetings. The principal needs to establish an **expectation** that disagreements may be inevitable in creative problem solving and shared decision making.

The Role of the District

The district's superintendent and board of education play a key role in determining the effectiveness of their school site councils. For councils to be most effective, district staff and board members should:

- **Establish district level coordination.** Representatives from all the building school site councils should meet regularly to review their work and provide opportunities to support similar goals and objectives. The district QPA Steering Team could provide this coordination.
- **Clearly define the role and purpose of the councils.** This can be accomplished by creating operational guidelines such as the sample in Appendix C for councils, allowing flexibility to meet individual building needs. The District QPA Strategic Plan should include council guidelines and timelines.
- **Demonstrate that they believe school site councils are a valuable part of the operation of their schools.** They can do this, for example, by having key administrators attend council meetings and by providing space, typing, copying and related support for council activities. It is important to communicate with council members and the public as soon as possible to acknowledge their participation in the council (Appendix D).

- **Provide information on district level policies and procedures.** This could include available resources as well as constraints or limitations.

- **Review the work of the councils.** Each council will prepare a summary report annually to be submitted with the QPA annual report to the local board of education and State Board. The local board should provide support for council activities whenever possible. Prior to their participation in the QPA process, schools/districts will submit this annual report to the local board and then to the State Board.

- **Provide councils with training and technical assistance.** This assistance can be done through in district training or assistance in attending workshops and conferences. Training should be available for new council members or group retraining whenever necessary.

- **Acknowledge the effort council members put into their work.** The district staff and board members can recognize council members through such means as awarding certificates of appreciation, hosting luncheons or dinners for them, publicizing their efforts and achievements in district newsletters and/or writing news releases about them for local newspapers.

Part II

Decision Making

The purpose of the school site council is to work with the school/district to determine the methods to be used to meet the designated goals and objectives and evaluate the site's performance. As a group, the school site council will need to utilize decision making skills which require teamwork and effective communications.

Teamwork

A School Site Council is effective when:

- all council members feel responsible for the team, the goals it has set, and the success of its activities;
- important decisions are made jointly, after everyone has had an opportunity to express their opinions;
- it encourages the free exchange of ideas by asking individuals for their opinions during discussions;
- it plans its meeting agendas and activities, but is willing to alter them as circumstances change;
- it supports its members when they try new skills; and,
- it evaluates how well it is doing as a team from time to time.

A School Site Council will fail if its members:

- block the work of the council by being negative or refusing to agree, even after the team has come to a decision;
- attack other members of the team, deliberately hurt their feelings, belittle them or try to take credit for what they have done;
- refuse to take the work of the council seriously;
- are boastful about personal achievements or try to make themselves appear better than others;
- withdraw from the group and refuse to participate in its discussions or its work;
- argue for the point of view of only a certain segment of the school community rather than represent everyone with an interest in the school; or
- try to dominate the council and gain attention for themselves.

Council members can assist the team by:

- initiating ideas, making suggestions for procedures, and proposing tasks;
- asking for clarification of what has been said and seeking suggestions and ideas from others;
- expressing what they think or feel and offering information;
- clearing up points of confusion, offering examples and clarifying alternatives before the group;
- summarizing discussions so the group knows what it has accomplished;
- testing the practicality of suggestions by applying them to real situations;
- checking to see if decisions have been reached or the work of the group almost concluded;
- keeping channels of communication open and encouraging everyone to make contributions;
- helping others reconcile their disagreements, find common ground, and recognize their similarities as will as their differences; and
- encouraging others by listening with interest to what they say and by being warm, friendly and responsive to them.

Effective Meetings

Effective meetings don't just happen, they are planned. Since most of the school site council's work will be accomplished in meetings, it is important that each member do what they can to make council meetings productive. One of the most important things to do is to encourage participation by all council members. Participation produces a sense of ownership and commitment to the work of the council. Also, the credibility of the council and its members is reinforced by well planned and well run meetings.

Getting Organized

- Know why you're meeting/be clear about the expected results of the meeting.
- Have a chairperson.
- Have a recorder.
- Set up a space so people can see each other easily.
- Make sure all materials are readily available.
- Have an agenda. Set priorities and tentative time limits for each topic.
- Allow time for the group to discuss how it is functioning as a group.

Conducting the Meeting

- Review the agenda and make changes as necessary. Make sure everyone is clear about and in agreement with the tasks to be accomplished.
- As agenda items come up, first focus on progress made since the last meeting, then discuss areas where problems arose and consider options for resolution.
- Summarize the discussion often.
- Be aware of how the council is arriving at decisions and test to see if group members are in agreement with the methods they are using.
- If the council reaches an impasse and can't seem to resolve an issue, stop the group and spend some time discussing what might be getting in the way.
- State next steps clearly.
- Start and end on time.

Discussion Ground Rules

Before a council reaches a decision, there is often a lot of discussion. A good discussion is one that is open, with all members sharing their ideas. Here are some ways to make the council discussions productive:

- Come prepared to talk about agenda items. If everyone does their homework, meetings will be more efficient and decisions more effective.

- Listen carefully to what others say. Try to understand their point of view. See if you can learn something from them.

- If you don't understand what is being said, say so. Ask for examples and illustrations.

- Join in on the discussion. Don't wait to be called on. Say what you think. The other council members need to know your thoughts on the subject.

- Don't speak too long or so often that others do not have a chance to speak.

- Disagree when necessary, but keep it friendly. State why you hold your opinion, but don't insist on it being accepted by others.

- Never argue a question or point of fact. It is a waste of time. Look up the answer or have someone do it for the next meeting.

Common Obstacles to Listening

Speaking is only half of a discussion. If no one is listening, communication is not taking place. While we are all guilty, at times of not paying attention to what is being said, this can prevent the council from making effective decisions. Following are some traps to avoid during discussions.

Talking: You can't "receive" while you're "sending."

Thinking of what you are going to say when you're supposed to be listening.

Mentally arguing with the person who is talking.

Preoccupation: Thinking about something else while someone else is talking.

Impatience: Feeling annoyed with the speaker.

Poor environment: Noise or other distractions in the room; physical discomfort.

Divided attention: Trying to pay attention to someone or something at the same time as you are listening to someone else.

Not realizing that listening is work: Listening is not passive. The listener must work to listen and absorb what the speaker is saying.

Mental criticism of grammar or appearance.

Mental or physical fatigue.

Failure to "see" the speaker: Meaning is conveyed through expressions, tone and gestures as well as words.

Two senders, no receivers: Two people talking at each other at the same time.

Effective Decisions

Council members are asked to make many different decisions. The council should stay focused on fulfilling their purpose--advising the school in evaluating their goals and objectives and determining methods to be employed at the school site to meet these goals and objectives.

Characteristics of Effective Decisions

- **The ideas and talents of the council members have been well used** in arriving at the decision. The topic has been fully discussed and everyone has had an opportunity to give their input.
- **The time spent arriving at the decision has been well used.** All the pertinent data has been presented and analyzed. The group remained focused on its goal.
- **The decision is correct, or high in quality.** In other words, it accomplishes what the council set out to do.

- **The decision is acted on by group members.** The members are committed to the decision and take whatever action is needed to ensure that the decision is implemented.

- **The decision making ability of the group is improved.** The decision making process was a learning experience for the council.

How Decisions Get Made

There are a number of effective methods by which a council can arrive at decisions.

- **By authority**: decisions made by the chairperson or someone else who has been delegated authority by the group. Sometimes these decisions are made after consulting with the group; sometimes not. Setting an agenda is one example of this type of decision making.

- **Majority rule**: decisions arrived at through voting. Those on the losing side of a vote may have little commitment to the decision, so this style of decision making is best used with decisions of lesser importance.

- **By minority:** decisions made when fewer than half of the members are involved. A task force or committee decision is an example. A council should decide ahead of time whether a task force or committee will have the authority to make a final recommendation.

- **Averaging individual opinions:** decisions arrived at by polling individuals for their opinions. The opinion expressed most frequently becomes the decision of the group. This process is somewhat like majority rule except that no discussion occurs and the decision can be made by any combination of numbers in the group.

- **Consensus:** decisions arrived at after thorough discussion of all possible alternatives, where everyone has had plenty of opportunity to be heard, and where, ultimately, everyone believes that the final choice is the best that can be made under the circumstances. This style of decision making can take a long time, but it creates the highest commitment, so it is the style most appropriate for important decisions.

Communicating with the School Community

School site council members are representatives of different constituencies within a school community. No school site council will be effective without the support of the total school community--staff, parents, community members, and students. Gaining support for council activities hinges on effective two-way communication. As a representative body, the council needs to establish clear procedures for reporting council activities. It is also important for the council to have methods established to receive information from the community which involves as many people as possible in the life of the school and the work of the council. This section describes some methods your council can use to involve others and to communicate constructively with all members of your school community.

Involving Others

Research has shown that schools with better student outcomes are those that welcome parents and community members and actively seek their involvement in the life of the school.

Develop close ties with all other organizations within the school including the school's parent or parent-teacher organization, booster club, Chapter 1 Parent Advisory Council, faculty, student council and all other organizations within the school. Jointly sponsored projects can build collaboration and reduce any feelings of competition that may arise between the school site council and other groups. Some joint activities might be:

- Presentations of the school's School Improvement Plan to parents/citizens at public or PTA meetings;
- Newsletters, information brochures or publications;
- Surveys/questionnaires to parents, teachers, and/or community;
- Identifying school/community needs and priorities for budget, curriculum, building;
- Review and approval of the School Improvement Plan.

Establish task forces. Some task forces could be provided with assignments to research information on a specific topic and bring recommendations to the council; others could serve as on-going subcommittees of the council. Among the task forces a council might create are:

Needs Assessment Task Force: The development of a school improvement plan depends on a thorough assessment of school and student needs. This assessment must become part of an on-going planning-implementation-evaluation process. A needs assessment task force can help plan strategies for conducting and interpreting needs assessments.

Curriculum Task Force: Studies have shown that parents are interested in what their children are being taught. They want to know more about course content than nearly anything else about the school. This task force could work closely with school staff and consult with them on curriculum development and text, audio-visual, and computer software selections.

Communications Task Force: This task force could assist the council in reporting council activities as well as receiving information from the school community.

Getting Information to the School Community

There are many ways school site councils can communicate about the school and the council's activities to the community. These activities might include:

Inform all school staff about council activities and establish procedures to get staff input. Time should be set aside at faculty meetings and the QPA school steering team meetings to share information about council activities and discuss issues under consideration by the council.

Establish a "key communicator" program. There are individuals in every school community who are in touch daily with many people. The corner grocery merchant, local ministers, mail carriers, municipal governing body members, real estate agents--the list is endless--can serve as key communicators of information about the school to the community. Each council member could enlist at least five such people to serve as key communicators. It is important to make sure these people are kept informed about what is happening in the school and about the activities of the council.

Produce an on-going school/council newsletter. If the school already has one, make sure there is always information included about council activities.

Make presentations about the school and the work/recommendations of the council to the PTA, the Board of Education and to various community groups, such as the local Chamber of Commerce, senior citizens groups, civic organizations, etc.

Distribute the minutes of council meetings as widely as possible. Post the most recent minutes near all the entrances to the school, in the teacher's faculty room or distribute a copy to each staff member. Print a synopsis in the newsletter. Send copies to the central office and board of education. See if the local newspaper as a public service will print the minutes on a monthly basis. Share them with other councils in the district.

Get information to the parents of high school students through the student newspaper. Ask any student members of the council to write brief articles for their school newspaper and ask that these articles and meeting summaries be included in the paper.

Set up a council booth at school functions including back-to-school nights, open houses, and parent orientation sessions.

Listening to the Community

In addition to building support for the school, councils need the input of their communities in order to develop strategies for improvement. Following are some ways they can do this.

Canvass the community and establish a list of all the" publics" represented in the school community. Senior citizens, parents of preschoolers, non-parents, special interest groups, parents of private school students, ethnic groups, governmental agencies, and civic club members are all publics. Establish a key contact person on the council to serve as a link with each public. Make sure each group is considered and included in all surveys and opinion polls conducted.

Hold neighborhood coffees. This is an old, "tried and true" method of acquainting citizens with their school and it is also a good way to get input on community concerns. Printed material may be distributed, a media presentation may be given, and/or a question and answer session held. But the focus should be as much on listening as it is on giving information.

Consider messages, rumors, and concerns conveyed to the council by key communicators within the community.

Invite the total community to meet for a short panel discussion presented by council members and the school principal, followed by an open forum where citizens can express their ideas and suggestions or anything else about the school that is on their minds.

Conduct telephone interviews. A good time to do this is during the months of January and February. A sampling of public opinion at the mid-point in the year helps the council know how well parents understand the school's progress or lack of it. Information gathered by telephone can become the agenda for subsequent meetings and give the school staff valuable findings for school/community relations.

Newsletter Tips

If your council decides to produce a newsletter as a way of communicating with your school community, here are some hints on how to make it effective.

Decide who your audience will be. Will the newsletter go to staff? Parents? Community members? Each of these audiences are likely to want different types of information about the school. You don't need to produce separate newsletters, just keep all your audiences in mind.

Ask a variety of people (teachers, administrators, parents, students) to write stories to offer a variety of viewpoints.

Include articles about a variety of items including: upcoming events, past events, test results, school resource needs, curriculum and discipline standards.

Keep stories short. Be sure the first paragraph answers the questions: who, what, where, when, and why.

Avoid educational jargon. Keep writing straightforward and simple. Use short, declarative sentences.

Be positive, not negative.

Be accurate and objective. If an opinion is included, say whose opinion it is.

Always identify people by their titles or positions (teacher, administrator, parent, student, etc.).

Use headlines to capture interest and to convey the central idea of the story.

Make your newsletter attractive by:

- using photos, charts, maps and graphs when appropriate;
- making headlines stand out;
- leaving plenty of white space between stories and around borders;
- using at least two columns on a page; and,
- proofreading carefully.

Give your newsletter a name that includes that of your school.

Avoid dittoing or mimeographing your newsletter if at all possible. These are hard to read and give a poor impression.

Make sure your local library gets copies. Also distribute them to local businesses, real estate offices, doctors' waiting rooms and as many other public places as possible.

Making Effective Presentations

Most people get "butterflies" when they are asked to make a presentation. The most important thing to do is **be prepared**.

Think about your audience. What do they want/need to know about the topic? Providing them with the necessary information--and nothing more--is your objective.

Remember: Your goal is to gain your audience's support for the school, the council, and/or the council's recommendations.

Prepare an outline of your presentation containing the key points you want to make and supporting information for each.

If possible, prepare a visual (overhead transparency, slide, flip chart, handout) for each of your key points. It will be more effective if the message can be conveyed in a picture. Choose a medium that is suited for the size of your audience and the presentation room.

If you think you might forget a key point, transfer your outline to a series of 3 x 5 cards with one point on each card. Do not write out the presentation unless you have been asked to do so as a handout. If you write it out, you will be tempted to read it to your audience. If you read it, you will lose eye contact with those listening. Eye contact is important if you want to convince someone of the validity and importance of what you are saying. A side benefit of looking directly at people is that it makes you feel less nervous to talk to one person at a time.

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse. Rehearsing is the single most important thing you can do to ensure an effective presentation (and less nervousness). A well-rehearsed speech is one that has been given so often that you no longer need your cue cards.

Gathering and Analyzing Information

An important responsibility of the school site council will be to assist the school in gathering and analyzing information about the school. This process of gathering and analyzing is referred to as a needs assessment. A needs assessment is not a research study. It is a careful review of information concerning the characteristics of the programs, services and climate of the school.

The results of the needs assessment information can be used to develop the performance goals and objectives and assist in identifying strategies to be used to meet those goals and objectives.

The school improvement process is the basis for improving Kansas schools under the Quality Performance Accreditation (QPA) System. Local schools and districts have the latitude to investigate a variety of systems/models and to adopt/adapt/ create one that fits their unique needs. This process is to focus on the achievement of Kansas students, ensuring equitable, individualized learning opportunities that meet both the unique and shared needs of all students.

The QPA school improvement process contains a number of steps. As with any dynamic system, an important attribute of the process is a feedback loop for current data and information. Continual feedback of information, transformed into knowledge, provides stability, guidance, growth and intelligence to the system.

Characteristics of Data to be Gathered

As indicated previously, an important role for the school site council can be in assisting in the gathering and analyzing of data and information about the school. Care should be taken to ensure that the information used in forming goals and objectives should be appropriate and accurate. It should:

- provide meaningful information. That is, give information about the school that is important to student achievement.
- measure elements common to the entire school so comparisons can be made.
- measure elements that continue from year to year so comparisons can be made over time.
- provide information that can be understood by everyone.
- be such that school or district staff can collect the information without undue effort or cost.
- be generally accepted as valid and reliable statistics.

Conducting A Needs Assessment

A needs assessment is a process of comparing the current situation in the school (what is) with the desired conditions (what should be). The needs assessment should identify strengths as well as areas needing improvement. The outcome is a list of the primary strengths and the primary needed improvements of a school.

Types of Information Used

Several general types of information are often used in needs assessments to determine areas of strength and areas of needed improvement:

- Student performance data including results of standardized tests, grade averages, failure rates, etc. for the last three years. This information should be broken down by gender, socio-economic class and ethnicity of the students.
- Student participation data including attendance rates, participation in special courses or programs, participation in extra-curricular activities, and dropout rates. Where possible, this information should be broken down by gender, socio-economic class, and ethnicity of the students. Attendance data should be available by grade, school, district, and state to allow comparisons.
- Staff and community opinions about the school's program offerings, standards, or climate.
- Staff and community opinions about student performance including homework, attitudes, motivation, and discipline.
- Student opinions about relationships with staff, teacher expectations, school climate, discipline, relationships with peers, etc.
- Concerns raised by parents or community groups.
- Reports on special programs, e.g., for the handicapped, bilingual students, remedial students, etc.
- Information about the composition of the community including educational levels, family patterns, and occupational stability, as well as community resources such as libraries, educational institutions, and active civic groups.

Basic Tasks in a Needs Assessment

1. Determine the areas of information to be reviewed.

2. Identify specific types of information that will help identify strengths and weaknesses. Develop a plan to review the school's programs and services in terms of the school's goals.

3. Assemble available information. Consider statistics assembled by the district, reports prepared for the state or federal government and surveys. The most current information available should be used.

4. Decide how surveys of staff, students, and parents will be conducted.

5. Select or develop survey instruments and administer them.

6. Compile the data in an organized manner that is meaningful for developing improvement goals and objectives and for showing evidence of attainment of previous goals.

7. Interpret the data. Study each data source individually and carefully. Note relationships among the sources. For instance, if 10th grade test scores and attendance are low and the dropout rate is high, an investigation should be made to determine whether these items are related.

8. Compare the data to various standards. Look at national, district, and state results wherever possible. Note where the school falls short and where it exceeds the standards. Seek further information to explain variations.

9. Look at changes in data over time. Note where improvement is being made and where it is not. Seek information to explain the changes.

10. Make one list of the school's strengths and another of the areas where the school needs further improvement. Now you have information which can be used in developing the school's performance goals and objectives and the school's improvement plan.

Conducting Opinion Polls

Councils may want to include the opinions of their school's community, professional staff, parents, and students in their needs assessment. Following are some guidelines for obtaining this information in an organized fashion.

Selecting a Sample

The council can select a random sample of each group that would be representative of the total group to be surveyed. A random sample is a group of people drawn from a total population in such a way that every member of the total population has an equal chance of being selected. To select a random sample of students, for example, the council could select every fourth name from student rosters. A random sample of parents could be chosen by selecting every fourth name from the school's list of parent names.

The decision about the percentage to use in a sample is an important one. The sample must be as representative of the entire population as possible. Councils must decide how many people's opinions they need in order to feel comfortable that they have a full picture of the sentiments of their constituents. Councils should use a sample size (25% or larger) that gives them confidence to make decisions based on the sample responses. Be aware that a larger sample than needed should be selected to account for those members of the sample who fail to participate (e.g. do not return a survey). Check with school personnel to find out what the response rates have been in the past.

Types of Opinion Polls

There are both formal and informal ways to gather opinions. Keeping track of issues raised at PTA or board of education meetings or in letters to the editor of the local newspaper are examples of informal methods. The section on Communicating with the School Community suggests ways that councils can gain informal input from parents and other community members. It is difficult to keep systematic records of this kind of data, however.

Questionnaires and interviews are two of the better known formal methods to gather opinions. Both can be done systematically, which means the information is more reliable. The simplest and least time consuming is a written questionnaire. But there are some drawbacks to using a questionnaire. One is that questions can be misunderstood, so the answer you get may not be to the question you intended to ask. Another is the cost of mailing them out (questionnaires sent home with students can result in a number of "lost" forms). The return rate is likely to be low also (30% is considered good) and you may have no idea whether those who responded are typical of all the people who received the questionnaire.

Interviews, either by telephone or in person, eliminate the drawbacks of written questionnaires, but they produce other problems. The telephone interview is easier because it allows the interviewer to reach more people in a shorter period and it can be done most any time. It does, however, exclude those without telephones and those with unlisted telephone numbers, and talking on the phone may be difficult for those who have a limited command of standard English.

Person-to-person interviews are the most difficult to conduct. They take more time, more people, more planning and more training. Yet the results from these surveys are probably the most reliable, if the sample is well-selected.

There are numerous ways to get an interview sample. You can go to the third house on every other block, for instance, or select the tenth person to come through the grocery store door, the parents of one student in every class or homeroom, or every hundredth name on the tax rolls. Or you can systematically identify a group that represents the subgroup populations you want input from.

Group interviews are another type of face-to-face interview. The advantage is obvious--it takes less time to interview a group of people than it would to interview each individually. In addition, a discussion can trigger thoughts in individuals that they might have forgotten to mention if they were alone with the interviewer. However, discussion can also have the opposite effect. Some people may be reluctant to voice an opinion that they think the rest of the group might not support.

Councils must weigh the pros and cons of each polling method before determining how they want to proceed.

Writing Questionnaires and Interviews

All questionnaires and interviews have three parts: an introduction, content questions, and demographic questions.

The introduction should state what the survey is about, who it is being conducted for, why it is being conducted and how the answers will be used. This should be as clear and succinct as possible. If it is a written questionnaire, there should be directions on what to do with the form once it has been completed.

Questions must be phrased neutrally. That is, they must not hint at a desired answer. Do not, for instance, ask: *What do you think of the school's failure to adequately teach math?* Or even, *Do you believe the school's math program is a failure?* Instead, use a question like: *What, if any, concerns do you have about the school's math program?*

The sequence of questions can also influence answers. The question, *How many hours would you estimate your son/daughter spends watching TV on school nights?* is likely to trigger a particular answer if it is followed immediately by, *What do you think is the major cause of falling reading scores among today's youth?* By placing the questions in this order, people are cued to blame television. Such questions are worthless in gaining accurate opinions.

Demographic questions ask the respondent such things as age, sex, race, education level, income level, occupation, etc. This information permits a better understanding of the overall data. It will allow, for instance, a

comparison of opinions about the school by ethnic group, which could help pinpoint equity issues. Asking teachers to identify themselves by grade level or department might aid in determining the cause of program differences.

Testing the Survey

An extensive field test of a questionnaire or interview is not necessary, but trying it out a few times before administering it will help insure the questions are clear. Some questions can be taken in more than one way. A trial test will also tell you if the survey is too long, offensive in any way, or too vague to give you the kinds of answers you are looking for.

Tabulating Results

Tabulating survey results can be simple or difficult, depending on the type of questions used and must be taken into consideration when questions are developed. Open-ended questions--those that allow for many different responses--can be difficult to tabulate, while simple yes/no answers are easy to count. A question such as, *What do you think ought to be done to improve discipline in our school?* is likely to elicit dozens of different answers. In order to make judgements about the opinions expressed, these responses will have to be categorized in some way and the numbers falling into each category will have to be counted. This can be a complicated and time-consuming process.

Either/or and multiple choice questions, however, require only a simple tabulation of the number of responses falling into each of the preselected categories. The trade-off for ease of tabulation is a loss of information. Respondents might well come up with good suggestions or ideas that hadn't been thought of by the council or faculty, but have no way to express them in a multiple choice format.

The degree of difficulty in tabulating responses will also be affected by the number of different data breakdowns that will be required. If the information will be disaggregated by race, income group, sex, or other demographic category, then individual answers will have to be sorted into those groups. This can be fairly laborious if done by hand. Fortunately, some schools have personal computers that can do the job quite simply.

Tips for Conducting Surveys

The following are some things to keep in mind when preparing and using opinion surveys:

- Set up a time-line for writing, testing, and tabulating the results of the survey. Assign responsibilities for the various steps.
- Publicize the poll in advance so that respondents will be looking for it.

- Prepare a report of the findings, including a description of how the poll was conducted, who sponsored it, how the sample was picked, and what the questions were.
- Make sure the results of the poll are shared with those who participated in it.
- Publicize any resulting programs or projects with the community so they know the poll was useful.
- Don't make the survey too long. It may be better to conduct a short poll on one or two aspects of an area or program about which you want information, rather than a very long one with many areas included.

The Planning Cycle

Planning is an ongoing process, not an event. The diagram below shows the planning cycle sequence. It begins with a needs assessment, which leads to the identification of issues to be addressed. These issues are then prioritized because some will be more important than others. The priority issues or problems are analyzed, strategies for solving them are identified, plans for implementing strategies are laid and then implemented.

Identifying Issues

The information collected during the needs assessment and its analysis is the foundation for identifying issues the council wants to address. The needs assessment process will provide the basis for beginning the planning cycle. This step in the planning cycle is to identify and organize them so the entire council can agree upon the issues of greatest importance.

A good way for a group to address the issues identified in the needs assessment is to brainstorm. Brainstorming is the perfect tool for groups to use whenever they need to produce multiple alternatives for looking at the needs assessment issues.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming is an excellent technique for developing innovative ideas and to get everyone to share their thoughts. In order to brainstorm, you will need to have a chalkboard or a flip chart and stand and one person to act as the recorder. (Two recorders are helpful, as ideas tend to come very fast.) There are a few simple rules that should be followed:

- List every idea no matter how far out it seems to be.
- Don't judge whether ideas are good or bad--just call them out. Even silly ideas stimulate new, creative ideas.
- Don't explain your idea—be brief.
- Don't try to "sell" your idea—simply state it.
- No discussion or comments until after the list is complete.
- It is all right to repeat an idea or add to one already listed.
- Work quickly.
- Invite everyone to participate, but don't force it.
- When the flow of responses slows down, stop the process.

Next Steps

- Originators should explain items that are unclear.
- Delete duplications.
- Group items; reword items with approval of originators.

Setting Priorities

Many issues will be addressed during the brainstorming process. But, since not everything can be tackled at once, the issues will have to be put into priority order. The answers to two questions will help determine which issues should come before others. They are:

- How serious is the situation, problem or issue?
- How urgent is it?

A process is available to help in setting priorities if the group feels they need help. This process outline and Priority Worksheet are as follows.

Step 1: List the issues identified through brainstorming.

Issues
1
2
3

Step 2: For each issue, write down the evidence of its seriousness.

Issues	Seriousness
1	1
2	2
3	3

Step 3: For each issue, write down the evidence of its urgency.

Issues	Urgency
1	1
2	2
3	3

Step 4: Rate the seriousness and urgency of each issue on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being high. Multiply the two numbers to get an overall rating for each issue.

Issues	Serious x Urgent
1	1
2	2
3	3

Step 5: Using the rating as a guide, assign a priority to each issue.

Priority of Issues
1
2
3

Note: There may be reasons other than seriousness and urgency for assigning particular priorities. An issue that the board of education has asked all councils to address, for instance, would receive a high priority even though the issue may not be particularly serious or urgent in the school. Also, councils should take on some issues that are short-term and relatively easily solved as well as those that require long-term solutions. Success is important to group morale and to the way the school community perceives the council.

PRIORITY WORKSHEET

Issues	Seriousness	Urgency	Serious x Urgent	Priority

Analyzing Problems

The resolutions to some of the issues councils set as priorities will be clear. That is because the problems are clear. Other issues, however, will require additional analysis before objectives can be set and strategies for achieving them developed.

You have a problem when you have something that is other than it should be, when you do not know why, and when you want to know why. The key concepts in problem analysis are:

> **Should**—the way things are expected to be or to function based on standards or performances in effective schools. Shoulds are best stated in concrete, specific and measurable terms. They are not just hopes or desires.
>
> **Actual**—the way things are actually going. The actual may be below, equal to, or above the should. If it is significantly below, you have a problem.

You analyze problems by isolating what makes one problem different from other problems. How is it unique? What is it? What is it not? The key is describing it precisely so that causes can be clearly identified and specific actions fitted to the problem.

The process consists of answering the following questions:

> **What**—What is the problem behavior? What is happening that should not be happening? What should be happening that is not?
>
> **Where**—Where does the problem occur? Are there patterns? Where does it not occur where it might?
>
> **When**—When does the problem occur? Does it often occur before some event? When does the problem not occur, but might?
>
> **To What Extent**—How big a problem is this? Can you measure it? Are there trends or patterns? How serious is it?
>
> **Changes**—Has anything about the problem changed over time?

Once you have clearly described the issue or problem, its resolution becomes a council objective. The next part of the cycle is to identify possible solution strategies.

Identifying Strategies

From the needs assessment have come issues. These issues have been prioritized and analyzed and objectives have been established. Now it is time to identify implementation strategies. There are two suggested techniques to use in this part of the planning cycle. One--brainstorming--was described earlier. It is used to generate alternative measures that can be taken. The second is a force field analysis, which is a way to determine whether a selected strategy is feasible. The steps and their sequence are:

Step 1: Brainstorm a list of possible strategies for addressing an issue.

Step 2: Decide which strategies hold the most potential for success. This can be done simply by having each person select the three they think have the highest potential, then counting the number who voted for each item. Since some strategies can be implemented in tandem with others, more than one can be selected for further review.

Step 3: Conduct a force field analysis on each of the high potential strategies using the Force Field Analysis steps and the Force Field Worksheet form which follows.

Force Field Analysis

Once a council decides what it is it wants to accomplish, it needs to look at the forces that may prevent it from succeeding and those that may help it accomplish its objectives. The Force Field Worksheet can be used to analyze forces and help the group determine whether its goal is realistic and what actions it can take to minimize negative forces and encourage positive ones.

Following are directions for using the Force Field Worksheet.

Step 1: Enter the council's strategy at the top of the worksheet. State it clearly and concisely. Be specific. To illustrate, if a council has set objectives to increase reading achievement scores in grades two, four and five by at least five percent, one strategy to reach each of those objectives might be:

Strategy: Develop new reading support program.

Step 2: Brainstorm positive and negative forces. Ask: What could keep us from accomplishing this? Is there anything within the council that could get in the way? In the school? In the district? In the community? What might help us achieve this? What skills and talents lie within the council that will support this action? Who and what within the school/district/ community will help us?

Enter positive and negative forces in the appropriate columns on the worksheet. Be specific--indicate who, what, where, when. List forces that work both for and against your goal in both columns. Indicate how they do each. Example:

Positive Forces	Negative Forces
Teachers are behind it.	Tight budget year.
Reading specialist available.	Will take a lot of time.
Council members willing to serve on committee.	

Step 3: Identify the forces, both positive and negative, that could have the greatest impact on accomplishing the strategy. Which are the most likely to happen? These are your key variables. Check them on the worksheet.

Positive Forces	Negative Forces
✓ Teachers are behind it.	✓ Tight budget year.
Reading specialist available.	Will take a lot of time.
Council members willing to serve on committee.	

Step 4: For each of your positive key variables, identify actions the council can take to maximize the likelihood of its happening and to strengthen it when it does occur. Be specific--list who will take action, when, and the resources that will be needed. For each of your negative key variables, identify actions the council can take to minimize, neutralize, overcome or reverse it. Again, be specific. If you can't establish an action to deal with a force, note that on the worksheet as well. Example:

Actions: Teachers are behind it. Help teachers conduct a "reading is fun" campaign. Get parent volunteers to assist in recording numbers of books students read and maintaining bulletin boards. (Joan to form committee.) Urge the PTA to back the campaign and the curriculum revision process. (Harold to approach PTA Executive Committee.)

Actions: Tight budget year. Seek adopt-a-school partner to help fund purchase of materials. (John to get estimate of dollars needed and sound out the superintendent and board of education. Mary to bring issue before district Adopt-A-School coordinator.)

Step 5: Decide whether this council strategy is feasible.

Is the strategy feasible? A new reading support program is possible only if the school is assured of board support or an external source of funds can be found. The council needs to check with board of education before proceeding.

FORCE FIELD WORKSHEET

Strategy

Positive Forces	Negative Forces

Actions:

Is the plan feasible?

Planning Actions

After a force field analysis has been completed and it has been determined that a particular strategy or series of strategies to achieve an objective is feasible, a detailed plan must be developed. Planning exactly how a solution will be implemented is a critical council responsibility. The entire council should be involved for several reasons:

- Implementation usually requires a series of detailed steps. Council members should all be aware of what steps are to be taken, why, and by whom.
- Councils are usually composed of idea people and detail people. This is definitely the time for the detail people to contribute their talents.
- It is easy for people in groups to assume someone else is taking the necessary steps to put group decisions into effect. Complete implementation planning requires all parties to take responsibility for clarifying exactly who is to accomplish the needed action.
- Planning may reveal flaws in solutions that require modification or consideration of alternatives by the council.

The Planning Worksheet for developing action plans and directions for using it follows.

Step 1: State the measurable objective and/or purpose of the plan. Be as specific as possible. Include a beginning date and a target date for completion.

Step 2: List the assumptions the council is making in developing the plan--the things it believes to be true, but does not have full information on.

Step 3: Identify the outcomes expected and how they will be documented or measured.

Step 4: List the tasks or action steps that will be taken to achieve the objectives. If some must be taken in sequence, list them in order. Establish beginning and completion dates for each action.

Step 5: Identify necessary resources and barriers to overcome in order to complete the plan.

Step 6: List the individual or individuals who will be responsible for each action.

Step 7: List individuals whose support is required or who must be informed about an action.

Reviewing Plans

Below are some questions councils might want to use when reviewing their council short and long term goals prior to beginning to work.

- Is the plan of action workable?
- Are the resources required--time, staff, equipment, funds--available?
- Are the outcomes clear?
- Are the timelines reasonable and do they allow some margin for error?

When reviewing council actions plans, the following questions could also be asked:

- Does the plan build on the strengths of the schools?
- Are all parties committed to the plan?
- Is the need being met important to staff and students?

PLANNING WORKSHEET

Objective: **Assumptions:**

Strategies/Actions:	Timelines	Responsibilities	Resources Required	Expected Outcomes	Documentation

Implementing Plan

After the council's plans are made, it is time to look for problems--things that can make your plan go awry--and to identify steps that can be taken to avoid them. You won't have time to deal with everything that might go wrong, so you need to identify those that are likely to be critical to the accomplishment of your goal. The Potential Problems Worksheet will help you with this process. The directions for using it are:

Step 1: Brainstorm a list of things that could go wrong with your plan. Be specific-state how your plan will be affected if this happens. Enter them in the "Potential Problems" column.

Step 2: Determine the seriousness of each problem, if it does occur, on a scale of 1 (will not seriously disrupt the plan) to 10 (will severely hinder the plan). The group may want to have individuals do their own rating first, then tally the results. Enter the results in the "Seriousness" column. Select the most serious potential problems.

Step 3: Determine the likelihood each of the most serious problems will occur on a scale of 1 (low probability) to 10 (high probability). Again, it may be easier to have group members individually rate the problems, then tally the results. Enter the results in the "Probability" column. Select the highest risk problems.

Step 4: Determine the likely causes of the highest risk problems. Keep digging until you find causes that you can do something about. Enter them in the "Causes" column.

Step 5: Determine the actions the council will take to prevent each likely cause from occurring and, thus, avoiding the problem. Enter these in the "Preventive Actions" column.

Step 6: Decide who will be responsible for the preventive actions and make the necessary assignments.

Once you have identified potential problems and laid plans for avoiding or minimizing them, you have done as much as is possible to ensure the success of the council's plan. Now it is time to implement it. But the planning cycle is not yet complete. Another activity remains--monitoring.

POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WORKSHEET

Potential Problems	Seriousness	Probability	Causes	Preventive Actions	Responsibility

Monitoring Progress

Councils are responsible for the successful implementation of their action plans. The goal of any plan is to complete all tasks on schedule, within budget, and with the expected outcomes. Of course, this does not always happen and adjustments will be necessary as the plan is implemented.

The council should review progress periodically during implementation. Reports on implementation should be prepared by appropriate council members. Delays and other problems should be discussed and resolved if possible.

Strong monitoring will help the implementation of the plan. Remember that adjustments are normal and that not all ideas will work out as originally planned. The function of monitoring should be to identify and correct problems rather than to find fault or blame people for failures.

Finally, keep records of progress, of discussions of problems, and modifications to the plan. These will be helpful in reviewing the work of the council and providing direction for future plans.

The following resources have been used in developing this guide:

Kansas Legislative Report, August 5, 1992.

Kansas Quality Performance Accreditation, Revised August, 1992.

Presentation-Dr. Chuck Smith, Parents University.

School Improvement Council Guide to Effectiveness, School Council Assistance Project, The University of South Carolina, Revised Edition, 1992.

School Advisory Council Guides, School Council Assistance Project, College of Education, The University of South Carolina.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

K.S.A. 1992 K.S.A. 72-6439(c)

(c) (1) On or before January 1, 1993, each school in every district which operates more than one school shall establish a school site council. The council shall be composed of the principal and representatives of: Teachers and other school personnel, parents of pupils attending the school, the business community, and other community groups. A school site council may be established in school districts which operate only one school or, in lieu thereof, the board of education of the school district shall serve as the council. School site councils shall be responsible for providing advice and counseling evaluating state, school district, and school site performance goals and objectives and in determining the methods that should be employed at the school site to meet these goals and objectives.

(2) The state board of education will evaluate the work of the school site councils and the effectiveness thereof in facilitating educational improvement and restructuring. The results of the state board's evaluation will be contained in a report that will be published on July 1, 1995.

(3) The provisions of this subsection shall expire on June 30,1996, unless extended by the legislature during the 1996 regular session.

Appendix B

School Site Survey

Following is a compilation of information about some of the existing school/district level councils of which staff of the State Board of Education are aware. Included are the location of the requirement (state or federal statute/regulation), the level of the council (district or school), required membership, and whether the council could be used as a school site council.

School and districts may wish to use an existing council or draw representatives from existing councils in forming school site councils. Whatever their decision, school districts are urged to continue to try to do what is in the best interest of the children and youth in each school.

While reviewing existing councils, it is important to remember the membership for school site councils as established in the legislation. It requires the following be represented on each school site council:

- teachers;
- other school personnel;
- the principal;
- parents of pupils attending the school;
- the business community, and;
- other community groups.

DISTRICT/BUILDING COUNCILS SURVEY

Name of Council	Required By	Level	Required Membership	Can Council be Site Council?
Adult Education Programs	Federal (highly encouraged, but not required)	School district-(only 16 councils, the rest are community colleges)	Former students, business, politicians, site director, local adult educators	No
Chapter 1 Parent Involvement	Federal regulations, Sec. 1016 of Chapter 1, P.L. 100-297	District	Parents of children participating in Chapter 1 programs, Chapter 1 teachers, pupil services personnel	No
Drug Free Schools	Federal grant	Local or Substate regional	Parents, teachers, students, government officers, medical professionals, law enforcement, community organizations, treatment and prevention professionals	Yes
JTPA	Federal	Each 8% program	Social service, business, industry, education, local community organization	Can use existing local board
Parents as Teachers (For information)	National Parents as Teachers Network	School-based	Principal, Kindergarten teacher, related services/ counselor, Health Educational/special education/parent education teachers	Yes

District/Building Councils Survey (cont.)

Name of Council	Required By	Level	Required Membership	Can Council be Site Council?
PAT Community Advisory Council	National Parent as Teacher network & State Statute	Community/district	Local pediatrician, newspaper editor, parents, business, other agency service providers (0-5), varied religious, mental health, hospital	Yes-but it may be too large a group
Migrant Education Parent Advisory	Federal regulations, Chapter 1 of Title I, ESEA Sec. 1016 and 1202(a)(4)	District level	At least 51% parents of migrant children, balance is of interested parties	No
Professional Development Council	SBR 91-1 146c	Building/District/Regional	Certified staff who represent local education agency divided equally between teachers and administrators	No
QPA Building Based Improvement Team	Not required but in Guidelines	Building/District	Education Staff with Community Input	At the discretion of the local school board
Special Education Advisory	KAR 91-12-34(a)	Special Ed Unit (Coop, Int, LEA)	Must include parents of students with exceptionalities	No-must be LEA/Coop/Interlocal level)
Vocational-Technical Education Advisory	KSA 72-4415(e)	AVTS and AVT may have area councils	As approved by local board, may NOT include educators	No-can not include teachers

Appendix C

Sample Local School Site Council Guidelines

_____ School
School Site Council Guidelines

ARTICLE I

Name of Organization

The name of this organization will be the _____ School Site Council.

ARTICLE II

Purpose

The purpose of the _____ School Site Council will be to:

- Provide advice and counsel to the school in evaluating performance goals and objectives;
- Help determine methods which could be used by the school to meet the goals and objectives;
- Serve as a liaison between the school, school organizations, the community, and the local board of education by collecting and disseminating information about school improvement; and,
- Provide other assistance that the school may request.

The council will not have any of the powers and duties reserved by law or regulation to the local school board.

ARTICLE III

Representation and Membership

The _____ Council is required by Kansas law to have the following groups represented:

- The principal
- Teachers
- Other school personnel
- Parents of pupils attending the school
- The business community
- Other community groups

ARTICLE IV

Selection Procedures

Initially council members will be identified by the building administrator, who will recommend their appointment to the Superintendent and Board of Education.

ARTICLE V

Tenure

All appointed members of the council will serve two year terms. The length of terms are to be staggered and determined by lot. Any ex-officio members named to a council will serve one year term.

No limit will be set on the number of terms a member may serve.

The council may establish committees made up of staff, parents, business leaders, and other citizens to study specific issues and make recommendations to the council. These committees will not be permanent and will have no responsibilities beyond those outlined by the council when established.

Membership on the council will terminate when members:

- No longer have a child enrolled in the school or no longer live in the school attendance zone;
- No longer hold a teaching position at the school;
- Have missed three consecutive scheduled meetings without proper notice to the chairperson; or
- Submit a letter of resignation to the chairperson.

In the event of any of the above situations, the chairperson will appoint, a representative person who will finish the term of the person replaced.

ARTICLE VI

Officers

The Officers of the _____ Council will consist of a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary. The officers will be elected annually by the full council membership in the first council meeting of each academic year. At no time will these positions be held exclusively by all educators or parents. Any ex-officio member of a council is not eligible to be an officer of the council.

ARTICLE VII

Duties of Officers

The chairperson will preside at all meetings and have general supervision of the activities of the council. The chairperson will work with the principal in planning and directing the activities of the council including monitoring committee progress.

The chairperson, in consultation with the principal, will prepare an agenda for all council meetings, arrange for the agenda to be mailed to each member at least one week before each meeting, and have the authority to modify the agenda if it is determined to be in the best interest of the council's work. The chairperson will appoint temporary or standing committees as needed and serve as an ex-officio member of all committees.

The vice chairperson will exercise all functions in the absence of the chairperson and assist the chairperson as needed.

The secretary is responsible for:

- Keeping a full and accurate account of the proceedings and transactions of all council meetings;
- Providing a copy of the minutes to the council members, all faculty members, and/or other appropriate district administrative staff within one week of the last meeting;
- Preparing any official correspondence that the chairperson may request;
- Maintaining a council file in the school's administrative offices containing copies of all minutes, council correspondence, the annual school report, and the current council guidelines; and
- Maintaining a listing of the council membership with current telephone numbers and addresses.

ARTICLE VIII

Meetings

The council will meet *(monthly, or locally determined amount)* in the *(local location)* on the *(determined established dates)*. Special meetings may be called by the chairperson or vice chairperson as long as all council members are notified of the meeting at least 24 hours in advance and notice of such meeting is given to those who have requested notice of council meetings.

The first council meeting of the academic year will be called in *(determine date)*.

A simple majority of the council membership will constitute a quorum. Unless otherwise agreed, a majority of a quorum will be sufficient for adoption of any motion.

All council meetings are open to the public and anyone showing interest in the council and its activities will be encouraged to attend. Persons interested in presenting at a council meeting may request to be put on the agenda no later than seven days before the meeting date.

ARTICLE IX

Training

An orientation session that includes information about council roles, responsibilities, and functions as well as information on school and local policies and procedures will be held annually for all council members. Council members will strive to attend any training workshops sponsored by the district office or others which may be offered to help the work of the council.

The principal will share information on school activities, successes, and concerns with council members.

ARTICLE X

Amendments

These guidelines may be amended at any regular meeting of the council provided that the specific amendments have been introduced at a prior meeting, included in the minutes of that meeting, and are listed on the agenda of the current meeting except that by a two-thirds vote of those present an emergency may be declared and these guidelines changed immediately upon a vote of two-thirds of the members present .

Appendix D

Sample Congratulations Letter From Superintendent to New School Site Council Members

(Date)

(Member's Name)
(Address)

Dear *(Member name)*:

Congratulations on becoming a school site council member at *(School Name)*. Your participation on the council indicates your willingness to continue educational improvement efforts on behalf of *(District Name)*.

(Note this is a good place to tie in you district's mission to the work of the council).

Your school will benefit from the special perspective that you bring to the council and your commitment to school improvement. I will do all that I can to support your council's contribution to educational excellence in *(District Name)*.

Sincerely,

(Superintendent's Name)

cc: *(Principal)*

Sample Introductory Letter From District Contact to School Site Council Chairs

(Date)

(Chair's Name)
(Address)

Dear *(Chair)*:

I serve as the district's contact person for school site councils. If you need information regarding district policies, training opportunities, or other areas of concern related to the councils' functions, please feel free to contact me directly at *(phone number)*.

Your selection as council chair at *(school name)* is important to the ongoing improvement process in our district. The leadership you provide for council activities and operations is greatly appreciated. I look forward to working with you and your council to improve educational opportunities for all of our district's students.

Best wishes for a successful year,

(Your Name)
(Position)

cc: *(Principal)*

Sample Press Release Re: **School Site Councils**

Date:

Contact: *(Your Name, Position)*

Phone: *(Yours)*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

School Site Councils To Be Formed in *(District Name)*

By January 1, 1993 each school building in *(District Name)* will establish a school site council. The school site councils are to provide advice and counsel to the schools on specified areas of the schools' programs and operations. The councils will review many aspects of our schools and make recommendations to help in facilitating educational improvement.

The membership of each council will include the principal, representatives of teachers and other school personnel, parents of pupils attending the school, representatives of the business community and other community groups. Members of the council will act as the communication link between the council and staff, students, parents and the community. If you are interested in having more information about the school site councils in *(Your District)*, contact *(Contact Name and Phone Number)*.

Kansas State Board of Education
Approved 4/92

Strategic Directions for Kansas Education

The Kansas State Board of Education is charged with the general supervision of public education and other educational interests in the state. While clearly acknowledging the role and importance of local control, the State Board of Education has the responsibility to provide direction and leadership for the structuring of all state educational institutions under its jurisdiction.

The beginning place for determining the mission for the Kansas State Board of Education is the assumption that all Kansas citizens must be involved in their own learning and the learning of others. It is the combined effort of family, school, and community that makes possible the development of a high quality of life. It is the parent who is the first "teacher" of children. As we grow older, we learn that the school, the workplace, and the community support our lifelong learning and our training and retraining. The Board recognizes the responsibility it holds for Kansas educational systems and promoting quality education programs. The mission for Kansas education is:

To prepare each person with the living, learning, and working skills and values necessary for caring, productive, and fulfilling participation in our evolving, global society.

We believe that the strategic directions for the structuring of Kansas education must be organized to:

- create learning communities
- develop and extend resources for parenting programs and early childhood education
- expand learner-outcome curriculum and learner-focused instruction
- provide inclusive learning environments
- strengthen involvement of business and industry in education
- provide quality staff and organizational development.

Kansas State Board of Education
Kansas State Education Building
120 S.E. 10th Avenue Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182

Board Members

Mildred G. McMillon District 1	Kathleen White, Vice Chairman District 2	Paul D. Adams, Chairman District 3	Connie Hubbell District 4	I. B. "Sonny" Rundell District 5
Bill Musick District 6	Wanda Morrison District 7	Michael D. Gragert District 8	Mandy Specht District 9	Gwen Nelson District 10

Lee Droegemueller
Commissioner of Education

An Equal Employment/Educational Opportunity Agency

The Kansas State Board of Education does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, national origin, handicap, or age in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Any questions regarding the Board's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, or Section 504 may be directed to the Title IX Coordinator, who can be reached at (913) 296-3424, 120 S.E. 10th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas 66612-1182, or to the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, U. S. Department of Education.